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SENATOR CARDIN HELPS “BREAK GROUND” FOR BIG SLACKWATER HISTORIC TOWPATH RESTORATION

Senator Supported \$12.1 million in Recovery Funds for Project

WILLIAMSPORT, MD – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD) today joined Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary Beverley K. Swaim-Staley, C&O Canal Superintendent Kevin Brandt and other state officials in breaking ground for the restoration of 2.7 miles of the historic Big Slackwater Towpath. In 1996, this section of the historic towpath was closed following extensive flood damage.

The reconstruction will reestablish the towpath along a 4,000-foot stretch of historic walls. Intermittent sections where the retaining wall is missing or washed out will be reconstructed while other sections will require more modest stabilization. The project will complete the last link of trail allowing bicyclists to travel, uninterrupted, from Washington, D.C. to Pittsburgh, PA, via the C&O Towpath and the Great Allegany Passage.

“The reconstruction of the Big Slackwater towpath has been one of my top priorities for Western Maryland. It will mean jobs for residents of canal towns such as Williamsport and Hancock and it will attract visitors who want to enjoy the natural beauty of the C&O Canal National Historical Park,” said **Senator Cardin**, who strongly supported recovery funding for the project. “Western Maryland has become increasingly recognized for its scenic beauty, recreation activities and history and this project will add to all this region has to offer.”

“From the Catoclin Aqueduct to the Big Slackwater project, Gov. O’Malley has made key investments this year in the C&O Canal Towpath because these contributions are essential to preserving our heritage and to moving Maryland forward by boosting economic development in our region and by creating jobs,” said **Secretary Swaim-Staley**. “Maryland’s \$4.4 million investment in this project is the largest allocation of federal Transportation Enhancement funding the State has made in the past decade.”

The restoration of the towpath is scheduled to begin in late summer with an anticipated completion date of fall 2012.

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